THE

GREEN-CLOTH:

OR, THE

Verge of the Court.

AN

EPISTLE to a FRIEND.

By Mr. *Wh----d.*

Libertas quamvis inops omnibus Divitûm
Deliciis præferenda eſt, ubi ipſa minuitur. ERASM.

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BRITISH MUSEUM

AN

Epiſtle to a FRIEND.

A JOURNAL of my Life you urge,
Since my Retirement in the VERGE;
And tho', my Friend, 'tis ſomething hard
T' invoke the Muſe in *Scotland-yard*;
Yet ſince the Siſters don't deny
T' inſpire my Brethren, Garret-high,
And oftentimes to viſit deign
Vot'ries of *Smithfield* and *Duck-Lane*.
Tho' over Head and Ears in Debt,
By *Catchpoles* all a-round beſet;
Tho' how by Duns each Morning levee'd,
And Goods from Landlord are replevy'd.
Tho' all my Wants, my Shifts and Cares,
My ſad Inquietudes and Fears,

The Train of Evil which belong
To Men in Debt, muſt be my Song;
Yet twice my Friend ſhall never ask,
For thus begins th' unwilling Task.
But, Firſt, by way of Introduction,
Both for Amuſement and Inſtruction,
The Place we ſhall delineate,
Where Freedom makes her laſt Retreat.
This Privilege, ſo well defended,
Is from our Lord the King deſcended.
We need not ſearch old Annals o'er,
From *George*, up to the *Conqueror*,
To prove what good King firſt beſtow'd it,
On what Account his Leige allow'd it,
If 't has remain'd ſo, free from all Toll,
E'er ſince that *W---y* was our *W****
It matters not a Straw who gave it,
Since I, and many others have it.
It has been ſo Time out of Mind,
And is to no One's Reign confin'd;
This *Ne plus ultra* of the Sheriff
Would be the ſame, liv'd *G---* at *Exiff*,
And thus extends, ---*Eaſtward* from thence,
Where *Charles* the Firſt, ill-fated Prince!
Charles to true *Britons*, ever dear!
Does in Equeſtrian Pomp appear;

To that dire Place, I need not name it,
The Martyr's Blood will ever ſhame it.
Then *Southward* ſhe extends her Sway,
(The Goddeſs *Liberty* I ſay)
Saluting ---- and Madam † *Cleves*,
Since Prince and Princeſs took their Leaves:
Tho' may *their* Race adorn that Palace,
As long as *Dover* o'erlooks *Calais*.
Including too her Grace of *Marlborough*'s,
Her Grace, who would preſide at all *Boroughs*:
She conſecrates the fav'rite *Mall*,
And reſts at *Conſtitution-Wall*.

Thus far does Privilege, my Friend,
And ſome ſay far enough, extend;
In which if we 're content to keep,
We ſafe as Thief in Windmill ſleep;
But ſhould the daring Bard be found,
* *T' o'erleap th' inviolable Mound*,
On Shoulder Top the Bailiff dabs him,
And ſure as God's in *Glo'ſter* nabs him;
Quick to the Spunging-houſe they hale him,
From whence if no Man ſhortly bail him,

† It is very confidently reported, and upon a pretty good Foundation, that a certain great Lady, who paſſes for one of foreign Extraction, is an *Engliſh* Woman by Birth, whoſe Father's Name was *Cleves*, remarkable for his great Skill in Water-works, for which Purpoſe he was ſent for to *H*——*r*, from *Salisbury*, and took this Lady, who was then very young, with him—Where ſhe married the Count —— *&c. &c. &c.*

* See Brother *Welſted*'s Tranſlation of the Third Ode of the Firſt Book of *Horace*.

——— *Si tamen impiæ*
Non tangenda rates tranſiliunt vada.

He may be forc'd his Tent to pitch ill,
And go to meſs with *Cook* and *Mitchell*;
And how long there he may remain,
E're he his *Liberty* regain,
Heaven knows; unleſs Sir ***
In whom you know reſides no ſmall Soul
Shall, in pure Pity to his Want,
Or Merit pleading in *Courant*,
In which ſome lucky Thought he hit on,
Again reſtore him a *Free-Briton*.

But leave me here the luckleſs Bard,
And now return to *Scotland-yard*,
Which oft is found the Habitation
Of Men in ev'ry Craft and Station.
Here, Merchants, leſt they be moleſted,
For Bills, thro' Indigence proteſted,
Do often live at Six and Seven,
Until they make their Matters even.
Here was it, at the Expiration
Of the late immortal Seſſion,
A Troop of *Patriots*, Helter-skelter,
In this *Aſylum* ſought a Shelter;
And not a *Clerk*, until he knew,
As Time wou'd ſhew, who wou'd be who,
A ſure Protection here refus'd 'em;
Like Hoſtages of State they us'd 'em.

Here ---- in *Anna*'s Reign,
'Gainſt Dulneſs made his firſt Campaign:
To future Fame e're *Phœbus* rous'd him,
Or ---- Widow had eſpous'd him.
Here too St. ---- Dean, I'm told,
Old Songs and Sermons bought or ſold;
Here, *Millan*, did the Doctor ſigh,
Thy Book-ſtall was his Library;
Here his low Fortune he bemoan'd him,
E're yet the Lord of *O*--own'd him:
No dainty *Soop* regal'd his Gut,
Nor travell'd but to *Lilliput*;
Contented with an humble Club,
He told no *Story of a Tub*;
Knew not *Wood*'s *Half-pence* to defame;
And trembl'd at a *Draper*'s Name:
To Naſtineſs yet early bent,
Did firſt a *London Morning* paint;
But as he grew in Pow'r and Wealth,
He grew an Epicure in Filth;
And Art, at length, improv'd by Praiſe,
He cook'd a T--d a thouſand Ways.
Yet let (whene'er the Doctor dies)
The Tomb, which may ſtupend'ous riſe,
This Paradox, ye Sages! bear,
Let it in *laſting Types* appear.

" The Firſt who e'er arrived to Fame,
" By what has Thouſands brought to Shame:
" The Firſt who e'er grew ſweet by Stinking,
" Or found the Art to *ſoar* in † *Sinking*.

I could name Others, free as whiſtle,
But not to ſwell a ſhort Epiſtle,
Attend, dear *Harry*, while I ſay,
How heavily Time moves away.
Sometimes e're Morn begins to peep,
(For Debt was never Friends with Sleep)
I riſe; but e'er my Cloaths are on,
Tap at my Door - - Who's there?---
——————————— " here's One".
Here's One; - - who are you Friend, your Name?---
" Your Taylor, Sir," - - -
——————————— What *Liſt*?--
——————————— " The ſame"---
Come in. ---
——————— " Your Servant, Sir, I call
" At your own Time, my Bill's ſo ſmall,
" I hope I ſhall no longer wait,
" For Times are hard, and Loſſes great."
True, Mr. *Liſt*, this is the Day,
I ſaid I would a Part on't pay,
But Diſappoi ntments I have had,
Enough to make a Man ſtark mad:

Indeed

† See the Art of Sinking in Poetry.

Indeed you have been kind.---

——————— " You know

" How often, Sir, I come and go ;

" If I the Port'rage ſhould recount,

" To half your Bill it would amount."

I'am ſorry, Friend, indeed. " ———————

——————— " Indeed !

" Will Sorrow, Sir, ſupply my Need ?

" I tell you, Sir, it is a Shame, ———————

" And all the World your Conduct blame ;

" To run in Tradeſmen's Debt, and then

" Bid 'em get Payment how they can.

" A Gentleman ! By G--d I'd ſcorn,

" Ev'n I who am ſo meanly born,

" To uſe a Waſher-woman ſo,

" Tho' that, for ought I know, you do".

Come, Mr. *Liſt*, you know---

——————— " know what ?

" I know you'll never pay a Groat.

" But for your Comfort, I'll aſſure you,

" This priv'leg'd Place ſhall not ſecure you ;

" By G--d an *Order* I will get, ———————

" Altho' it coſt me half the Debt ;

" My Lord Duke's Valet is my Couſin,

" For whom his Grace wou'd back a Dozen ".

Perhaps

Perhaps no ſooner *Liſt* is gone,
But comes another thund'ring Dun.
Hiſt! *Phillis*, I'm not ſtirring ſay,
I'm Sick, I'm Dead, I'm run Away,
Say any Thing, ——
—— " Here's a Man, Sir,
" Who calls himſelf a Meſſenger,
" Sent from the Board".
—— Who *Perquiſite?*
Bid him walk up. Sir, yours, pray ſit.
" Sir, at th' hon'rable Board's Command,
" I come to let you underſtand,
" It is their Pleaſure you appear
" To-morrow, being Board-day, there;
" To anſwer *Liſt* a Taylor's Charge,
" Which here you have tranſcrib'd at large".
Pray bear my due Reſpects again
To th' Honourable Gentlemen,
And tell 'em I'll be there attendant;
They have my Word and may depend on't;
And what's your Fee?
—— " But Half-a-Crown".
Your Servant ——— wait upon him down.
Nor fail, dear *Harry*, the next Day,
The doubtful Summons to obey.
Not in more trim, or awful State,
A Bench of Juſtices e'er ſat,

Say thoſe, whoſe Fortune 'tis t' have ſeen both,
Than do theſe Gentry of the *Green-Cloth*.
And I put on a Look, demure,
As does a *Covent-Garden* Whore,
Whoſe Crime, poor Girl! is only ſuch,
Stitching too little, or too much;
Yet falls a Prey to Sir *J*---*G*---,
For what himſelf has more than once done,
It does not ſignify, Dear Friend,
Your Patience, or my Lungs to ſpend,
In a particular Recital,
Of what for Time is no Requital.
I therefore paſs in Silence by
The Speeches, Form, Phyſiognomy,
The Conſultations and Debates,
Of theſe our Petty Magiſtrates:
Whether or no they ſhew moſt Wit
In backing or rejecting *Writ*,
I ſhall not ſay, let thoſe decide,
Who oftner than myſelf have try'd;
Favour and Rigour I have had;
I know no Good, declare no Bad:
Tho' to ſpeak Truth and do 'em Juſtice,
(Which of all Principles the firſt is)
Conſider'd Serious or in Joke,
They ſeem a harmleſs kind of Folk.

And quaint as your Idea may be,
Few Men are envy'd more than they be.
Sir ----- (I ſhould have ſaid the ----)
Can ſcarce beſtow a better Thing;
Perhaps the Error made you ſmile,
But 'tis excus'd in modern Style;
And when I'm wiſhing to be great,
And running o'er the *Preſent State*,
This Pray'r has often been prefer'd,
I would to God it had been heard!
Then make me, Heav'n, a Clerk o'th' *Green-Cloth*,
They ne'er want dainty Bits, nor clean Cloth;
Fat R---! They ne'er ſet down to dine,
Without a Flask of *Bourdeaux* Wine;
Whilſt I, poor Devil! with Mrs. *Sutton*,
Jump joyful at a Breaſt of Mutton:
Alone with *Porter* I regale
And that, Heav'n knows, does often fail;
Nor one Jot better ſhou'd I think it,
Altho' a thouſand *W*---- drink it.
Say *Pope* then, is the Wonder greater
That I and *Welſted* write no better;
Conſider'd, is it not as great,
We write at all in ſuch a State?
Ah! Grieve not, grieve not ſorrowing Bays,
Nor call 'em *Beer-inſpir'd* Lays.

If *Stanhope*, *Burlington* and *St. John*,
E'er ſince you firſt became their Engine,
Champaign have freely bid you quaff,
As oft as e'er they play'd you off;
Have made your Garden, and your Grotto,
Gay, as the gayeſt Draughts of *Watteau*.

Ah! Yet behold with native Eyes,
And not ill-fated Bards deſpiſe;
As you have more within your Power,
Invite us to your *Twick'nam* Bower;
For once our drooping Spirits raiſe,
And mingle Wine with Malt-ſpun lays;
Amuſe us with diverting Stories,
Of wond'rous Schemes, of wond'rous Tories;
Tell us, ah! tell us, if you can,
Why lately you fell out with Man?
But pardon this not meant Digreſſion,
The Muſe is forward to Confeſſion.
At Two--- that Hour be ever thine---
When you, and all, but Boets, dine,
I wander home, with *Phil* conſult;
And ſmile if Dinner's the Reſult;
But ſay, what Bard forbears to moan,
When this appears the rueful Tone?

" Ah! Sir, there's nothing in the Pantry,
" And Dinner Yeſterday was ſcanty;
" Beſides 'tis hot, I'm like to choke".
Then *Phillis*, ſtep and pawn my Cloke.
" Where, Sir?"
———————— Z--nds! I caren't a Farthing.
" Why then I'll carr'it to *Spring-Garden*;
" There Int'reſt is but *Ten per Cent*,
" And there moſt Money's always lent.
But as 'tis probable, My Dear,
This Place has never reach'd your Ear,
'Tis richly worth our while to ſpeak on't,
And I digreſs again for ſake on't.
Know then that *Charity* has been
To *Liberty* ſo long a Kin,
Have liv'd ſo lovingly together,
That when the *Latter* wander'd hither,
Long time the *Former* ſought about,
And having lately found her out,
Submitted to this narrow Sphere,
And fix'd her Corporation here.
And here I make a Criticiſm,
Or, call it but a Witticiſm.
In Judgement, ſure it is a Flaw,
When Painters do this *Virtue* draw;

As if, O ſtrange! it dwelt with no Man,
They paint her in the Form of Woman;
And that ſhe may the better Charm,
An Infant place in either Arm.
Fools! nor Sex, nor Meaning, ye know;
As like a Man is *Seniſino*,
As is the Picture, which ye paint,
Like what ye ſtrive to repreſent:
Three Figures henceforth give not, but one,
Delineate Sir *R*--*S*--*n*

But ſee my faithful *Phil* appears,
Her Face a' diff'rent Aſpect wears.
Well Child, how much? *A Crown.* No more!
They ſaid the Cloak was too much wore,
'Tis well, tho' yet the Raſcals lie,
They ſaid the Cloak was too much wore,
But haſte to *Clark*'s or the Blue-Poſt,
And ask if they have Boil'd or Roaſt;
Call too at *Suky*'s, ſoftly ſpeak her,
And ask, if ſhe will truſt a *Sneaker*,
Or pay for't--we will have a Tiff,
And this Day bid adieu to Grief;
Be blith as *Venus* and as *Mars* is,
And bid the Catch-poles kiſs our A--ſes.

" Ah!

" Ah! Sir, there's little room for Comfort,
" Tho' yet, indeed, there wou'd be ſome for't,
" If Writing, *Place* would get a Man in,
" As't did your lucky Friend *Concaunen*.
" But what will boot this Priviledge
" When you have ne'er a Cloak to pledge?"
With Patience Girl a-while ſit down,
Sir * * * will not always frown;
If writing for him cannot win him,
Like *H* - - - we muſt write again' him.
" Do, Sir, ſome Reſolution take,
" Write any Thing, for Heav'n's ſake!
" For in my Mind a Belly full
" Compenſates for an empty Skull".
But leaſt your Patience I abuſe,
And jade, dear *Hal*, a willing Muſe;
At this Time I forbear to mention,
What elſe would ſtill be worth Attention.
How *Iriſh-men*, and ſometimes *Scotch-men*
(Who yet muſt have among 'em ſuch Men)
At Noon-tide wander round the Park,
Tell Trees, or dine upon the Bark;
For tho' theſe latter have in one Senſe,
The ſame View, Sentiment, and Conſcience.

Sir * * * (tho' righteous his Intention)
Cannot afford 'em all a Penſion:
As ſoon may he provide Tranſlation,
For ev'ry *P*- -- in the Nation.
Therefore till *Germans* ceaſe to breath,
And *Dutchmen* drink themſelves to Death,
And leave 'em room to be prefer'd,
They with the *Former* deign to herd.
How *Monſieur* in the Cellar dives him,
While Soop, or *Téte Mutton* revives him.
What at *Old-man*'s or *Young-man*'s paſſes,
The Kindneſs of Itin'rent Laſſes:
The Rant of Poets; and the Lectures,
Of State, or Miniſtry Projectors;
On which, Diſcourſe too often does turn,
From PATRIOTS to *Mother Osborne:*
The *Guard-Room, Tilt-yard, Tennis-Court,*
Where't always is, if we've any Sport.
The Buildings here, that riſe majeſtick,
Each One of which deſerves a Diſtich.
The *Pay, Admir'lty*, and War-Office,
And t'other too, which not far off is;
The Rigour of a Neighb'ring *Prieſt*:
The Humours of the *Veniſon Feaſt*:

With all that will occur hereafter,
To raiſe your Wonder, Spleen, or Laughter,
Might be the Sequel of my Song,
And make it, *Harry*, twice as long:
But too much Time 's already loſt,
A nobler Theme, another Poſt.
For ſoon as Buſineſs will permit,
We'll ſend you up another Sheet;
Full fraught with our moſt learn'd Advice,
In which we muſt be ſomething nice.
We'll rouſe our Thoughts, and take due Time,
And trifle not in Dogrel Rhyme;
But boldly whip the winged Steed,
And raiſe him to a nobler Speed.

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